

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSM-05 IO-13 OMB-01 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-10 MCT-01 /097 W
-----011628Z 008180 /42

P R 011511Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4681
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 0762

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: IS, LE, PFOR
SUBJECT: RABIN WEIGHS IN ON SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION; ALLON AND
PERES ALSO SPEAK OUT

REF: TEL AVIV 0733

1. PRIME MINISTER RABIN MADE HIS FIRST PUBLIC STATEMENT
JANUARY 31 (CABINET DISCUSSION EXCEPTED, TEL AVIV 730)
ON THE PRESENCE OF ADF TROOPS IN THE NABATIYAH AREA.
ADDRESSING THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE ISRAEL BONDS CON-
FERENCE IN JERUSALEM, RABIN TOUCHED ON THE LEBANESE
SITUATION BY URGING THAT NO PARTY SHOULD MAKE THE MIS-
TAKE OF VIEWING ISRAEL'S TOLERANCE AS A SIGN OF WEAK-
NESS OR A CHANGE IN ISRAEL'S POSITION. ISRAEL'S ONLY
CONCERN IS FOR ITS SECURITY, RABIN SAID, AND AT THE
THE MOMENT ISRAEL PREFERS TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM
BY DIPLOMATIC MEANS.

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2. DEFENSE MINISTER PERES, SPEAKING IN CARMIEL ON
THE SAME DAY, SAID THAT NOT ALL DIPLOMATIC MEANS
HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED (IN REVERSING THE ENTRY OF ADF TROOPS
INTO SOUTHERN LEBANON). PERES SAID THAT ONLY AT THE
END OF DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS WOULD THERE BE OTHER
MEASURES, BUT HE DID NOT ELABORATE. THE SYRIANS

KNOW WHERE THE RED LINE RUNS, AND ISRAEL INSISTS THAT IT BE HONORED. IN CASE OF VIOLATION, WE WILL TAKE CARE OF THEM (THE SYRIANS), PERES SAID. FM ALLON SPOKE OUT ON THE SAME SUBJECT WHILE ON A TOUR OF THE ISRAEL-LEBANON BORDER (SEE REFTEL). THE STATEMENTS BY THE THREE MINISTERS ARE CARRIED AS FRONT-PAGE BUT NOT LEADING STORIES BY ALL PAPERS EXCEPT THE JERUSALEM POST, WHICH RELEGATES THEM TO PAGE TWO.

3. ACCORDING TO THE WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT FOR HAARETZ (MARGALIT) ON FEBRUARY 1, LEBANESE PRESIDENT SARKIS HAS TOLD WASHINGTON THAT CONTRARY TO ASSUMPTIONS IN THE U.S. AND ISRAEL, THE ADF FORCE IN NABATIYAH IS NOT THERE FOR A PROVISIONAL STAY, NOR IN ORDER TO COLLECT WEAPONS FROM THE PALESTINIAN TERRORISTS. THE PRINCIPAL AIM OF THE SYRIAN FORCE, SARKIS REPORTEDLY SAID, IS TO PRESERVE THE ARMISTICE IN NABATIYAH AND TO PROTECT THE LIVES OF CHRISTIAN INHABITANTS THERE.

CONSEQUENTLY, WRITES MARGALIT, IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT A LIKELY DATE FOR THE SYRIAN DEPARTURE. IF THE SYRIANS CANNOT BE PERSUADED TO WITHDRAW THROUGH DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, THEN THIS MATTER WILL CONSTITUTE AN IMPORTANT SUBJECT FOR TALKS DURING VANCE'S MID-EAST VISIT. HOWEVER, IT IS STILL ASSUMED (MARGALIT DOES NOT SPECIFY BY WHOM) THAT THE SYRIANS WILL COMPLY WITH THE AMERICAN REQUEST TO EVACUATE NABATIYAH BEFORE VANCE ARRIVES, LEST DELAYING UNTIL THEN MAKES THEM FINALLY UNCLASSIFIED

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APPEAR AS SURRENDERING TO ISRAELI PRESSURE.

4. COMMENT: PERES' "WE WILL TAKE CARE OF THEM" IS THE STRONGEST PUBLIC POSITION TAKEN BY A TOP-LEVEL GOI OFFICIAL SINCE THE ADF MOVED TOWARD NABATIYAH ON JANUARY 23.

5. HAARETZ'S WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT (MARGALIT) AND ITS DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT IN JERUSALEM (GOLAN) HAVE NOW FILED CONTRADICTIONARY STORIES ON WHEN THE SYRIANS ARE EXPECTED TO LEAVE NABATIYAH. MARGALIT SAYS "BEFORE VANCE ARRIVES" AND GOLAN SAYS "DURING VANCE'S VISIT" (SEE REFTEL). THEY APPEAR TO DISAGREE ON WHETHER WITHDRAWAL "BEFORE" OR "DURING" THE VISIT WOULD INVOLVE GREATER LOSS OF SYRIAN FACE, BUT IT IS CLEAR BOTH ANTICIPATE SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL. IN THAT, THEY REFLECT THE OFFICIAL GOI LINE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, POLITICAL SITUATION, SPEECHES, MILITARY OCCUPIED AREAS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 01-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770035-0889
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770284/aaaacwao.tel
Line Count: 115
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 11816dcd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 TEL AVIV 733
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Sep-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3437713
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RABIN WEIGHS IN ON SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION; ALLON AND PERES ALSO SPEAK OUT
TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, IS, LE, SY, (RABIN, YITZHAK), (ALLON, YIGAL), (PERES, SHIMON)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/11816dcd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009